

**God Chose these people to welcome the New Born King  
December 17, 2017 – Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins**

The Christmas Season is here and it came without snow! I love the season and or those who argue that it is a Pagan Holiday and shouldn't be observed, I say, "This is the one period of time that businesses, charities, and churches are blessed with songs praising Jesus Christ, opening up of hearts to give to the needy and according to at least one article that I have read, the pagans adopted their holiday on December 25 after the Christians had observed it so it was really the Christians who started the tradition. I don't know and when I was asked this question just the other day, I told the young lady that there are those who would stomp out the name of Jesus in any way they can and personally I love seeing the lights, the gifts, and the joy that comes from families being together to celebrate Jesus' birth. "Joy to the world for the Lord has come."

Today I want to talk about those that were invited to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The first to learn about the event was the angel, Gabriel. In Luke 1:11, Gabriel is sent to a priest named Zachariah to give him wonderful news. He and his wife would have a baby boy in a few months and they were to call his name John for he was a chosen vessel unto the Lord. He would bring joy and gladness to the people and would turn many hearts of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. Also he would have a greater mission and that would be to go before the Messiah in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the father to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and to make people ready and prepared for the Lord. Zachariah asked how he would know that this would happen since he and his wife were elderly and beyond the natural season in their lives to bear children. The angel told him that he was Gabriel, the one who stands in the presence of God and he was sent to bring these glad tidings. Because Zacharias didn't believe the words that the angel spoke in prophesy, he was struck dumb, and was not able to speak until the birth of the child. In verse 24, his wife conceived and she praised the Lord for remembering her.

When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, the angel Gabriel was again sent to a young virgin girl named Mary and given the news of the coming of the Messiah. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph and they were both descendants of King David. The angel started his conversation with Mary with these words, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" Mary was afraid, but the angel told her to fear not for she had found favor with God. He told her that she had been chosen to bring forth a son and she was to call his name Jesus for he would save his people from their sins. He would be great; he would be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God would give him the throne of his father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of His kingdom there would be no end. Mary asked the angel how that could be since she hadn't been intimate with any man. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also. That Holy

One who is to be born will be called the "Son of God." He then gave her the news that her relative, Elizabeth was in the six month of pregnancy and would bear a son at an old age. For with God nothing will be impossible." Mary didn't hesitate to accept the plan of God for her life for she said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be according to your word." Then the angel departed. Mary hurried to visit Elizabeth and Elizabeth welcomed her with the words, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" She shared that as soon as Mary came to her, the baby leaped in her womb for joy!" Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then returned home.

The next person to have the news of the coming Messiah revealed to him was Joseph, Mary's betrothed husband. When he learned that Mary was pregnant, he was considering what he should do. He was a just man and didn't want to make a public example of Mary, so he considered breaking the marriage contract with her privately. While he was thinking about how to handle the situation, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. The angel told him not to be afraid of taking Mary to be his wife for the child she was carrying was conceived of the Holy Spirit. "Mary would bring forth a Son and Joseph was to call his name 'Jesus' for He will save his people from their sins".

This fulfilled the prophecy as written in Isaiah 7:14 stating that a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name Immanuel which translated means, "God with us." Joseph obeyed the command and took Mary to be his wife but didn't have any intimate relationship with her until she had brought forth her son and Joseph called his name Jesus.

In Luke 2 we learn that Joseph and Mary travelled to Bethlehem to be registered in accordance to a decree that Caesar Augustus made. While they were there, Mary's days were completed and she was due to deliver her baby. Because there was no room in the inn, she brought forth her son in a stable. The Lamb of God was brought forth surrounded by animals. He was welcomed into this world by his creation.

In the same country, there were shepherds tending to their flocks at night. These were animals that were raised for the specific purpose of being sacrificed for the sins of the people. In Luke 2:9, the angel of the Lord stood before them and they were greatly afraid. The angel told them not to be afraid for he was bringing them good tidings of great joy which would be to all people. He announced that in the city of David there was born that night a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. The sign for them would be that they would find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men". As soon as the angels departed, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing which the Lord has made known unto us." They hurried and found Mary, Joseph, with the Babe lying in a manger. When they had seen him they spread the news of what they had

encountered far and wide. All those who heard it marveled at the news that the shepherds gave to them concerning Jesus Christ the Lord. The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen as it was told to them.

When 8 days were completed for the circumcision of Jesus and the days of purification had been completed according to the Law of Moses, the parents brought Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. In the Law of Moses every male who is born shall be called holy to the LORD. They also offered a sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves to the Lord according to the Law of Moses.

Simeon, a just and devout man, who was waiting for the Consolation of Israel had the Spirit of God upon him. God had revealed to him that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. The Spirit led him to go to the temple. When the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelations to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." Joseph and Mary marveled at these words that Simeon spoke. Then Simeon spoke to Mary and Joseph concerning the wonderful gift that God had entrusted them with. "Behold this child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Next was Anna, an elderly prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. After 7 years of marriage she was left a widow. She hadn't left the temple for about 84 years and she served God with fastings and prayers night and day. She came into the room at the instant and gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. After Mary and Joseph finished all they had to do in Jerusalem, they returned home.

In Matthew 2, we learn that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod and wise men from the East came to Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard these words he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. He gathered all the chief priests and scribes together and inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

They answered, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet, "But you, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

Herod secretly called the Wise Men and sought information from them just what time the star appeared. He sent them to Jerusalem and told them to go and search carefully for the young Child, and when they had found Him they were to bring back word to him that he might also come to worship him. They departed and behold the star which they had seen in the East went before them and led them to the place where the Child was. When they

saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. When they entered the house, they saw the young Child with Mary, his mother, and fell down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They were warned in a dream not to return to the palace of King Herod so they departed for their own country another way. If you read Matthew chapter 2, you find that King Herod didn't intend to worship the King that had arrived within the past 2 years, but he was determined to kill him. Jesus had enemies out to destroy him as soon as he was born. Satan wasn't going to make his life easy on this earth. The powers of good and evil will be at odds with each other until the time comes when God, the Father, says "This is enough" and destroys Satan, the false prophet, and the beast by throwing them into hell. See Revelation 20:10. The battle that we fight is not against humans. It is a spiritual battle between Jesus who died and gave his life that we might be able to choose salvation and Satan who has humanity bound by sin and uses everything in his power to deceive people and desires to keep them from enjoying the blessings of eternal life and gaining a life of peace, joy and happiness in the presence of the King of Glory where Satan can no longer subject them to temptations, sorrow, sickness, death, hell or the grave.

In Revelation 22 there is a wonderful description of eternal life. A pure river of life, clear as crystal, proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore 12 fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

There shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There will be no night there; they won't need lamps nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

In verse 11, it reveals that whatever spiritual condition you are in at Christ's return will remain for eternity. "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." He continues with the words of Jesus, "Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." Blessed are those who do His commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates of the city. Revelation 21:18 describes that city. The walls are constructed of jasper and the city are pure gold, like clear glass. The foundation of the walls of the city are adorned with all kinds of precious stones: The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth, emerald, then sardonyx, next sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, amethyst. The twelve gates were 12 pearls and each individual gate was of one pearl and the street of the city was pure gold. No one shall enter that is defiled for outside the gate are those who are sinful and unholy.

The sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, and liars are listed in this category. Beware!